



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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A View From The Top: Words From The ABS WA Regional Director

A View From The Top

Words from Michael Tindall, the ABS WA Regional Director

In my first few months with the ABS as Regional Director in Perth, I have been on a steep learning curve. During that time I have been continually impressed not only by what the ABS does, but also what the WA office does over and above our national programs for the benefit of the WA Government and Community.

Some examples of the work the WA office does, includes the publication of WA Statistical Indicators, feature articles specific to WA, outpostings to government agencies, joint projects with institutes on WA specific surveys, and Statistical Consultancies to make ABS data work better for clients.

Many of these services are provided free of charge, while others are charged for on a cost recovery basis. Our challenge is to encourage users to drive our prioritisation of projects. While we already have excellent relations with the State Government and structures in place to facilitate information exchange, we would like to enhance these processes to deliver information that best helps the WA Government to make informed decisions about WA's future.

This year is a big one for the ABS with the release of the 2006 census data. This data

not only forms the basis for many future ABS data releases, but it also gives the most complete picture of what makes WA what it is. It is exciting because, unlike previous years, substantial data from the census will be available free on the web. There are also some great new tools that will give people interesting snapshots about where they live.

It's great to be involved with the ABS in such an important year and I look forward to ABS in WA maintaining and expanding its services to the WA community.

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Western Australian Statistical Indicators (WASI)

WASI

Western Australian Statistical Indicators

(ABS cat. no. 1367.5)

The March quarter edition of the Western Australian Indicators publication contains feature articles examining WA's resources and agriculture sectors.

Resources

The resources industry is important to the economic and social development of Western Australia, contributing more than one quarter of the state's total production per year and almost half of its exports. At the end of the 1990's, the resources industry was under considerable pressure from falling world mineral and energy prices. However, in recent years, rapid industrial growth and infrastructure development in China have boosted world prices for mineral and energy resources to record levels generating record growth in resource industry investment in WA.

The resources industry is by far the largest contributor to the Western Australian economy, but only ranks as the state's sixth largest employer from a total of 17 industries. While price increases generated by rapid growth in the state's export markets resulted in increases in the value of resource commodity production, increases in the volume of output have not been as widespread.

Agriculture

Despite experiencing two severe droughts in the last 5 years, the value of agriculture production in Western Australia has nonetheless increased over 17% during that period. However, there was considerable fluctuation in agricultural production from year-to-year and in 2004-05, there was a decrease in both rural commodity prices and the value of the state's agricultural production.

Western Australia's agriculture is divided into three major categories. The first category is crops, which made up 66% of total agricultural production in 2004-05. Livestock used for meat was the second largest category, making up 22% of total production in 2004-05. Livestock products is the third category, contributing 12% to total production in 2004-05.

Over the last 5 years, crop production has risen from \$2815 million to \$3371 million in Western Australia. The main cereals grown for grain include wheat and barley. The value of livestock produced for meat has increased by almost 22% over the 5 year period to 2004-05, mainly cattle (and calves) and sheep (and lambs). Livestock

products, such as wool, milk and eggs, increased only marginally over the last 5 years in Western Australia.

For further information, please contact Phil Smythe on (08) 9360 5224.

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Innovation in Australian Businesses

Innovation

In Australian Businesses

(ABS cat. no. 8158.0)

The WA office of the ABS has responsibility for producing Australia-wide statistics relating to Innovation and Technology. Within this suite of statistics, *Innovation in Australian Business* is a high profile survey providing data on a wide range of innovative characteristics of businesses.

Innovation is a key driver of economic growth. The main aim of the ABS Innovation Survey is to inform government policy makers, aiming to improve Australia's international competitiveness.

Content of the ABS Innovation Survey was based on the concepts and standard questions developed jointly by the OECD and Eurostat, known as the Oslo Manual.

Results from the 2005 ABS Innovation Survey have recently been released on the ABS web site.

Topics covered include:

- incidence and type of innovation;
- barriers and drivers of innovative activity;
- collaboration skills and capabilities sought by innovative businesses;
- intellectual property protection methods;
- degree of novelty of innovation;
- proportion of income;
- expenditure related to innovation; and
- source of funds for innovative activity.

Broad level data is available from the summary publication, *Innovation in Australian Business* (ABS cat. no. 8158.0). Additionally, detailed data on all the topics covered has been loaded to the ABS web site as data cubes.

The level of detail and information provided is in response to previously identified demand for much finer levels of innovation data, especially at the state by industry and

state by employment size levels. These data cubes can be downloaded free of charge from the ABS web site.

At the state level, Western Australian businesses reported the highest percentage point increase in innovation rates, rising from 29% in 2002-2003 to 37% in 2004-2005. Businesses in WA were the second most innovative state or territory in 2004-2005, following closely our neighbours in South Australia.

Two of the key drivers for businesses in WA to innovate include 'Responsiveness to customer needs' (70%) and 'Establish a new market' (36%), both of which were reported by the highest proportion of businesses in any state or territory. WA businesses that did not innovate in 2004-2005 reported that the highest barrier to innovation was 'Lack of skilled staff' (36%). This was highest in WA businesses in the Property and Business Services and the Construction industries.

Over 9% of WA's innovating businesses employing 100 or more persons accessed government funding for innovative activity.

Future data on innovation will be collected as part of the Business Characteristics Survey, with key innovation indicators collected annually and more detailed innovation activity data collected every second year.

For further information or responses to queries regarding the Innovation survey, please contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

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Feature Article: 2006 Census Data

2006 Census Data **Coming Your Way Soon**

The ABS's Data Processing Centre (DPC) in Melbourne has been a hive of activity ever since your Census form, along with that of 20 million other Australians, was picked up by a Census collector, sent through the secure eCensus portal or posted to the DPC in August last year.

The initial trickle of forms arriving at the DPC quickly became a flood, and it has been all hands on deck ever since! In fact, some 800 staff have been working hard processing over 10 million Census forms, a job which will eventually result in accurate and informative Census data being available for all to use.

Seven months later, the Census data is now undergoing final checks in preparation for the first release of data in the middle of this year.

RELEASE DATES

As with previous Censuses, the 2006 Census data will be available in two releases. Those variables which are simpler to process (such as age, sex, country of birth, proficiency in English, income, etc) will be released in mid 2007.

Those variables which are more complex to process, such as labour force status, occupation, and method of travel to work, are processed later so as not to hold up the release of the bulk of the Census data. These variables are expected to be released late 2007.

CENSUS PRODUCTS

A wealth of information about the Australian community was collected in the Census, and **you will soon have access to more Census data than ever before.**

The ABS is releasing a new suite of online products to make accessing the 2006 Census data quick and easy. Whatever your data needs or technical skills, there will be a product available for you.

The following products are all free and currently available (with 2001 Census data) from the Census home page of the ABS web site (www.abs.gov.au/census):

QuickStats — provides a brief summary of key Census data for your chosen geographic area. QuickStats includes 15 tables with short textual descriptions, comparisons to Australian-level data and “top 5” responses for selected variables (eg. top 5 birthplaces in the City of Swan).

QuickMaps — designed to provide quick and easy access to thematically mapped Census statistics (eg. proportion of persons aged 55-64 in the Town of Vincent). The maps are available down to individual metropolitan suburbs.

Census Tables — single tables designed for those interested in either data on a particular geographic area, or data on a specific topic.

Community Profiles — there are six separate profiles to choose from which provide a range of key Census data. The 2006 profiles will contain up to 45 tables of data and are excellent tools for researching, planning and analysing data for your chosen geographic area.

SPECIALISED TOOLS

Over the next year, a suite of specialised products will be progressively released to the ABS web site. These include:

CData Online — will allow users to produce customised tables, graphs and maps using a pre-defined set of variables (a data cube). CData Online will be a free product.

Table Builder — will allow users to construct customised tables, graphs and maps using a database containing the full 2006 Census Unit Record File. Table Builder will be a fee-for-service product.

SEIFA 2006 — will provide users with a method of determining the level of social and economic well-being in different geographic regions. This product is expected to be released early 2008 and will be free to access.

Census Sample File — a comprehensive Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) of Census data, based on a small random sample. Useful for detailed analysis of socio-economic issues, this product will be released in 2008 as a fee-for-service product.

REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

The ABS also produces a wide range of Census publications which are available for

free download from the ABS web site:

Census Dictionary — a comprehensive reference guide to the 2006 Census. Designed to assist you to determine and specify your output needs (cat. no. 2901.0).

Picture of the Nation : The Statistician's 2006 Report — a nationally focussed compendium publication reporting on key Census data (due for release May 2008).

Social Atlas Series — one Social Atlas, containing a series of thematic maps, will be available for each capital city in Australia. Maps for selected regional centres will also be included. This product is due for release late 2007.

Further information about 2006 Census products can be found in the "New Product Briefs" link from the Census home page of the ABS web site (www.abs.gov.au/census).

CUSTOMISED SERVICES

If the Census information you require is not available as a standard product, the ABS can customise a product to meet your specific policy, planning, research and commercial analysis needs.

ABS consultants are experts in producing customised tables, fact sheets and statistical profiles. For further information, call 1300 135 070.

ADVANCE ORDER SERVICE

If your Census data needs are urgent, you can pre-order your customised tables through the Advance Order Service.

Clients taking advantage of this service will have their orders processed on a "first in, first served" basis, and tables will be available as soon as possible after the data has been released.

Contact 1300 135 070 or email <client.services@abs.gov.au> and mention the "Advance Order Service".

INFORMATION SESSIONS

The ABS has recently been conducting information sessions about the new range of 2006 Census products, including a hands-on demonstration of what is available on the ABS web site and what has changed since the 2001 Census.

If you missed out and would like to find out more, we can come to your organisation at a time and day suitable to you. Please contact Howard Garner, Census Liaison Officer on (08) 9360 5105.

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Outpostings: Getting To Know You

Outpostings

Getting to Know You

Over the years, outpostings have assisted the ABS in understanding the strategic

working environments of State Government agencies. This has allowed the ABS to form strong working relationships with these agencies, encouraging the use of statistics as an integral tool in their decision making process.

Outpostings are tailored to suit the needs of the agency in which ABS officers have been deployed. The outposted officer is one of the best ways the ABS has to provide statistical support to agencies and other organisations. In recent times, outpostings have prompted an increase in demand for expertise in statistical data provided by the ABS, due to greater emphasis being placed on evidence based policy development and evaluation.

An ABS outposting may assist with a particular statistical project or issue, and occur for a short period of 3-6 months. The officer's work could involve assisting with specific survey and questionnaire design, or locating ABS data and related sources. Alternatively, an outposting can be more strategic in nature and be longer term. This may provide a basis for agencies to review statistical information and develop skills within their agency. Outpostings can also assist agencies to improve the use of administrative data for statistical outputs which potentially could lead to a wider range of regional level data.

The WA office of the ABS has two outposted officers currently located within the Institute for Child Health Research providing assistance on the Aboriginal Child Health Survey. The office has continued its strong commitment to the outposting service by deploying skilled staff into several other agencies this year. Agencies that have taken up the ABS outposting service include the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Public Sector Management Division), Department of Industry and Resources, and the Department of Housing and Works.

Each agency has specified different requirements and outcomes they wish to achieve from their respective outpostings.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet sought the ABS outposting service following a recent review of its Public Sector Management Division (PSMD), which has prompted an increased emphasis on improving data collection and analysis to provide meaningful, timely and accurate reporting on the WA Public Sector workforce. Outposted officers, Lesley Martin and Kita Coles, are working collaboratively with PSMD staff to help achieve this goal and offer guidance in improving the department's data collection and decision making techniques.

Greg Hilton has begun a one month placement at the Department of Industry and Resources (State Development Strategies Group). An important objective of the outposting is to improve the use of statistics and to promote statistical best practice. Outpostings such as this help to develop the statistical skills of staff within the agency and also provide the outposted officer with an insight into the mechanics of policy formulation within State Government. As noted by Greg, "an outposting is a great way to increase your knowledge and use of statistics in the formation of evidence based policies".

The Department of Housing and Works and the ABS have recently agreed to a six month outposting. ABS officer Mark Bonini has commenced the outposting and is providing assistance in reviewing and organising a range of data collected by the department, particularly in the works and building services function. Mark is also working towards improving the strategic use of available data. A key feature of Mark's outposting is to support the proper use and interpretation of statistics by departmental staff and provide advice on the best ways to present statistical information.

For further information about ABS outposts contact Wayne Ridders on (08) 9360 5385.

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Statistical News: Developments in ABS Statistics

Statistical News

Developments in ABS Statistics

Rural and Regional Statistics

The Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre is pleased to announce the upcoming release of the Rural and Regional Statistics Newsletter.

This biannual release will deliver information on ABS statistics and developments relevant to users of rural and regional statistics around Australia. It will also showcase the breadth of statistics available for decision-makers at local levels. The first release of this newsletter is planned for April 2007.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please email <regional.statistics@abs.gov.au> with "Subscribe - Rural and Regional Newsletter" in the subject line.

Development of Service Industry Surveys

The ABS is planning to conduct surveys on Pubs, Taverns and Bars; Clubs (Hospitality); Public Libraries; Museums; and Legal Practices in respect of the 2007-08 financial year. The Service Industry National Statistics Centre (SI-NSC) will commence consultation with relevant stakeholders in April 2007. The aim of stakeholder consultation is to develop a common understanding between the ABS and key clients of the purpose of each survey and to specify survey requirements (eg. content, scope).

During the consultation and development phase, the SI-NSC will contact those organisations that made relevant submissions to the 2005 Service Industry Survey Forward Work Program review. If you would like to be included in the development of any of these surveys please contact the Service Industry National Statistics Centre by email <service.industries.program@abs.gov.au>.

Counts of Australian Businesses

This publication (ABS cat. no. 8165.0) presents business counts, including data measuring levels and rates of business entries to, and exits from, the Australian economy, and business survival. These data are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Business Register and are based on the ABS definition of a business (see ABS cat. no. 8162.0).

Detailed counts are presented by industry, state and territory, type of legal organisation, sector, and employment size.

For the majority of businesses, the main state of business operations is based on the main business address. However, for the remainder, the main state refers to the state or territory with the highest number of payees. Where a business operates in more than one state or territory, that business is only categorised to its main state or

territory.

The data presented in the tables have been confidentialised to ensure no individual business can be identified.

Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics

This publication (ABS cat. no. 5673.0.55.001) presents selected data on the characteristics of wage and salary earners in the Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) with the highest average income from wages and salaries in 2003-04 for each state and territory.

Data for all SLAs in Australia are available from Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia - Data Cubes, 2003-04 (ABS cat. no. 5673.0.55.003).

The estimates of the number of wage and salary earners and their characteristics, including age, sex, occupation and income, have been compiled from the Australian Taxation Office's Individual Income Tax Return Database.

For further information about the publication please contact Andrew Stidston on (08) 8237 7668 or email <regional.statistics@abs.gov.au>.

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Client Liaison: Summary of Events

Client Liaison

Summary of Events

ESCG and SSCG Meetings

During the March quarter, the ABS held meetings with clients from State Government agencies.

The Economic Statistics Consultative Group met on 15 February and listened to presentations from Phil Smythe and Mike Thomas on WA's recent CPI and International Trade trends. At this meeting, Elspeth Wilson was appointed as the new chair person, taking over from Ian Hafekost.

The Social Statistics Consultative Group met on 2 March and included presentations on the pathways of education for 15-24 year olds from Fay Agathangelou and on the 2008 Child Health Survey by Professor Steve Zubrick from the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research.

These meetings provide a great opportunity to share information on ABS developments and initiatives being undertaken by clients.

Supplementary Surveys

The 2006 State Supplementary Survey on 'Domestic Use of Water and Energy' was enumerated in October 2006. The data is expected to be released in April 2007.

Development of the 2007 State Supplementary Survey 'Community Preparedness for Emergencies' is continuing. Cognitive testing of new questions has been completed

and a pilot test was held in March 2007. Further development of the survey is being undertaken based on the results of the pilot test.

State Government agencies are urged to consider submitting topic proposals for the 2008 State Supplementary survey. Letters inviting submissions will be sent to State Government agencies in April.

For further information regarding State Supplementary Surveys, please contact Cal Hoad on (08) 9360 5947.

ABS Awareness

Margaret Garner, Western Australia's Information Skills Manager, visited Geraldton last November where she conducted ABS awareness and web site training at the Mid-West Conference for Regional Librarians.

Librarians from surrounding areas including Badgingarra, Three Springs and Wiluna met to discuss their experiences and keep up to date with new developments. Vicki Carlyon (State Library of WA) also attended to provide training and to catch up.

It was a great day, and fantastic to meet people who provide such valuable service to their clients in remote and rural communities.

There was overall appreciation of the revamped ABS web site and applause for the Free Statistics on the Web initiative. Special thanks to Andrea for arranging the day.

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Recent Releases: Publications of Interest

Recent Releases **Publications of Interest**

Publication Title	ABS Catalogue Number
The Australian Year Book	1301.0
Western Australia at a Glance, 2007	1306.5
Australian Economic Indicators	1350.0
WA Statistical Indicators (WASI)	1367.5
Quick Maps - (with Census 2001 data)	2063.0
Regional Population Growth	3218.0
Australian National Accounts	5206.0
International Trade in Goods and Services	5368.0
Housing Finance, Australia	5609.0
Regional Wage and Salary Earners Statistics	5673.0.55.001
Labour Force, Australia	6202.0

Average Weekly Earnings	6302.0
Labour Price Index	6345.0
Consumer Price Index	6401.0
Internet Activity, Australia	8153.0
Innovation in Australian Business	8158.0
Counts of Australian Businesses	8165.0
Retail Trade, Australia	8501.0
Building Approvals, Australia	8731.0

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Next Edition

Next Edition

The next edition of StatsTalk WA will feature a special article on the outcomes from the 2006 State Supplementary Survey, 'Domestic Use of Water and Energy'.

In addition to this, there will be a summary of the upcoming June quarter edition of WASI, which will contain two feature articles. One will look at Western Australian results from the General Social Survey which brings together a wide range of information from different areas of social concern. The other article will analyse research and development activities in Western Australia broken down by sector.

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About this Release

Stats Talk is a newsletter produced by the Western Australian office of the ABS. It provides information about new developments, publications, seminars, training and reviews

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